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BEHOLD IN THESE WHAT LEISURE HOURS DEMAND,
AMUSEMENT AND TRUE KNOWLEDGE HAND IN HAND.—*Cowper.*



THE OLD SAILOR CAN HARDLY MAKE MR. DEMARCAV OUT.

A YOUNG WIFE'S STORY.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "REDLANDS, OR HOME INFLUENCE."

CHAPTER I.

"AND so they married, and were happy ever after." Such were the nursery chimes following the stories of difficulty and opposition with which our juvenile ears used to be delighted. It would have been all wrong if the tangled paths had not led to a marriage. With that we were satisfied. Into the chequered life beyond we never cared to look, nor thought of

listening for the echoes of household voices afterwards. Custom has not much changed even now; narratives of this description are expected to have the one stereotyped termination. I am, however, about to depart from the rule, and propose beginning where I ought to end, giving the history of a short epoch, the first year of my married life. A very brief narrative will explain how I got into a position attended with strange incidents and ending in a strange way.

No. 1306.—JANUARY 6, 1877.

PRICE ONE PENNY.

On leaving school I went to reside with my mother's brother, Captain Worsley, R.N., with the understanding that I was to assist in the education of his only daughter, my cousin. My small patrimony having been expended on my own education, and having no other relation, I knew I must make my own way in the world. The kind offer of my uncle and aunt, however, did not at first receive all the gratitude it merited. I liked them; it was impossible to do otherwise; they were gentle, kind, and tender, but I wanted a larger arena. My ambition was not of the same sort as that of Julius Caesar, as I had read in my history, who said he would rather be first man in a small village than second man in Rome. To be first, like my uncle, in the neighbourhood of a small country town, had I enjoyed the distinction, would have been insufficient for my happiness; I wanted something less confined. With the insolent ignorance of a pretentious schoolgirl, I despised the simple tastes and occupations of what might be termed pastoral life. My uncle's rough costume and rough ways were not attractive to a girl accustomed for seven years to the style of South Kensington, whenever the young ladies of Mrs. K.—'s establishment were permitted to leave the grounds of Chatham House. My aunt was of a different type. She was still young, had a sweet presence, and was essentially feminine, which did not prevent her from tolerating the loud voice, and even enjoying the unpolished jokes of her sailor husband; nay, perhaps was the cause of it, for men and women are usually most attracted towards their opposites, as if some powerful magnet lay latent in extremes of character. Details of amateur farming never wearied her. Crops, weather, and new dressings—the ever-vexing question of wages and labour—were subjects to which she listened with unfailing patience. Was it not her own Richard who talked, and after so many years of silence? What did it matter if they were a little poorer at the end of every year? Richard liked farming; it was his hobby, and occupation is necessary for man. He was not going to sea any more, but would remain with her and Agnes always—always. They were wealthy compared with some, for they had enough, though the land for five years had made no return. Captain Worsley thought it would do well some day; meanwhile those painful partings, which tore the heart of the tender woman each time he left her to go to sea, were over.

"No more partings, my lassie," uncle would say sometimes, in his blunt, fond way, but with reverence, too; "no more of them till the timbers of the old ship go to pieces, and I am launched on the broad sea over which there is no return."

Aunt Edith carried her devotion very far; she allowed her husband to hold what he termed an agricultural council in a sitting-room on the ground floor, which ought to have been the dining-room, and regarded with resigned complacency the long clay pipes which assisted the invited farmers to delineate their experience and superior wisdom in slow returning puffs. The atmosphere of stale tobacco the morning after these periodical entertainments was a little trying.

But she was a good, loving wife, ever putting away all thought of self. Looking back I see that she had a full reward. Honoured and beloved, her presence was the light of her home. "Where is the mother?" was the first question asked as my uncle's feet touched the threshold, and a word or

caress for her the last thought as he quitted the house. She was certainly happy, and needed not the pity I often felt for a life so little suited to my own tastes. I did not then know that woman's highest meed was hers, to reign supreme in her little kingdom, and be the source from whence flows the happiness of those most dear to her.

Our village numbered six spinsters among its inhabitants, representing three households—one composed of three, another of two, and one lady living alone. The latter was a cheery elderly lady of small means and good family, who was often a guest at my uncle's table. On those occasions, if it happened to be in winter, stimulated by an addition to his audience, as we gathered round the fire, my uncle would relate the wonders of the deep, and detail stirring scenes of wind and flood, where human lives were for hours at the mercy of the wave. According to the number and attention of the hearers, his blue eyes flashed with a brighter sparkle, and—I could not help noticing it—the dangers deepened also! Miss Clayton was an attentive listener, and generally repaid the orator with sympathy and admiration. One evening her usual exclamations of interest were wanting. The graphic tale of "a man overboard" struggling in the waters, and whom it was impossible to save on account of the tempest, was nearly finished, when Miss Clayton surprised us all by asking, "What do gentlemen like best for breakfast?" My uncle turned a sharp glance on her, and then looked at his wife for an explanation of this unexpected digression. Aunt Edith looked puzzled, and she, too, turned her face towards the speaker, who repeated her question.

"Are you thinking of asking me to breakfast?" said my uncle, who speedily recovered the good-humour that had been slightly disturbed.

"No, no! not that, but I have a nephew coming to me for a short visit," said Miss Clayton, partly with pride and partly with alarm.

"Well, and if you had a couple of them, what matters?" said my uncle; "the more the merrier."

"But my nephew is almost a stranger; I have not seen him for many years. I wonder what makes him remember me now. There has been so little intercourse between us; we have not met since his mother's death, and that is more than twelve years ago. My poor sister thought so much of him, an only child; it is but natural, only—"

"Every crow thinks her own young one the fairest," blurted out my uncle, glancing with permissible satisfaction at Agnes; "and I do not see that ours is the worse for the foolish partiality of her old dad—do you?"

The question was addressed to me. Willingly could I confirm his opinion. My cousin Agnes, then only fifteen, in face, mind, and character was the counterpart of her sweet mother. Without great ability, she did her best to learn, and we got on pretty well; I did my best also, and her parents were easily satisfied. Perhaps I was the greatest gainer, for by seeking how to impart the knowledge I possessed to her, I deepened my own. The slowness of her intellect strengthened mine. Having to simplify for others is a sure means of improving one's self, necessitating greater attention to study than might otherwise be given to it. She had a certain taste for music, which I was able to cultivate to the satisfaction of her father and mother. Altogether, we made a happy quartette; my uncle,

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blunt and imperious out of doors, was kind and tender at home, and the ladies of the family were what is usually termed sweet-tempered. If my disposition was less lovable than the others, I had my temper well in check, having early learned the necessity of self-government if I would make my way in the world. More pains had been taken with my principles than with my manners; I could play a little, sing a little, but was decidedly more meditative than accomplished. Such as I was, I suited my relatives, and was the admiration of my girlish cousin, who would plod on for hours to master a task I had prescribed her. Dear Agnes, how pretty she was, with her soft blue eyes and wavy hair, that gleamed with a golden hue in the bright sunshine, and her rosy mouth, all smiles, as she flitted about her father—a fairy-looking girl, that seemed the good angel of the household.

Miss Clayton, too absorbed in some mysterious cares to sympathise in the paternal pride, after shaking her head *en philosophie*, added, "Victor Demarcay is half a Frenchman."

"And if he were a whole *mounseer* he would be no more than a man; and perhaps not that," said my uncle in an irascible tone. "We don't care for him—not a button. Let him come!"

"But I do not know how to feed him," pursued the lady, with serious perplexity.

"Give him a knife and fork, a good beef steak, a jug of ale, a glass of grog, and see if you cannot make a whole man of him; and don't forget to tuck a bib into his waistcoat lest he should soil his embroidered front."

This recommendation was followed by a hearty laugh, as my uncle related how he had sat at a table with a lot of foreigners with bibs tucked under their chins, looking like great babies waiting to be fed. Nothing, however, could relieve Miss Clayton's anxiety until my aunt, sympathising with her trouble, entered into her domestic arrangements, and made a few suggestions respecting the entertainment of this redoubtable nephew.

"How many days does he stop with you?" asked my uncle.

"One, I believe."

"One dinner, one breakfast. Bring him here to dinner, and that will diminish your responsibilities."

There was yet a difficulty. Miss Clayton, feeling that the offhand invitation might offend Mr. Demarcay's fastidious taste, was little comforted by my uncle's hospitality.

"Then give him a mutton chop at home, if my gentleman is more nice than wise."

The captain here swung himself out of the room, banging the door after him, a fault he often committed when displeased. Aunt Edith's feeble remonstrance, "Oh, my dear!" accompanied by raising her hand to her head, had as yet done nothing towards correcting him, he being by that time the other side of the door. When he returned, with his wrath appeased, he had always something more than usually pleasant to say, and the offence was forgotten. "Happy the home where there is no 'harping' upon an inharmonious string."

What we further heard of Mr. Demarcay was rather interesting. He was of French descent, on his father's side. Though naturalised in England two generations ago, the family had still property in France, and Mr. Demarcay senior usually visited it once a year. This Victor Demarcay, whose coming

cast so deep a shadow over his poor aunt's comfort, was the nephew and heir, there being no other male representative in the direct line, except his own son, a little boy of seven. He was a widower with two children, having lost a very pretty wife four years before. Why he visited his maiden aunt after so many years of indifference and neglect was a puzzle to her. We suggested many reasons which were far from satisfying her, and were all the while needlessly drawing upon our invention, as it turned out that he might be said to come by chance. He was about to visit a small property of his own some distance off, and suddenly remembered that the new railway on which he would travel came within two miles of Miss Clayton's house.

"And when is this pargaon of a nephew to honour our poor village with his presence?" My uncle had now returned, and spoke, with his ready smile, as if he had never been ruffled.

"To-morrow evening."

"And you will call upon him, my dear, the following morning, and ask him to dinner?" said kind Aunt Edith. "You like strangers, and it will be a help to Miss Clayton."

"It would indeed," said that lady, looking considerably relieved; "my Sarah is but an indifferent cook, and you know I could scarcely leave my nephew whilst I superintended her. Besides, your table would be more cheerful, and—and—"

"Well, prepare some roast beef and Yorkshire pudding, my dear," said my uncle to his wife, with twinkling eyes. "We only aspire to the wholesomes. Mr. Demarcay must expect no kickshaws, only plain food and an honest sailor's welcome. If he is too fine to make himself comfortable, why he will never come again, that's all."

So Miss Clayton went home to make her preparations, happy in the thought that the principal repast of her fashionable nephew would be furnished by a better cook than her own. Either from the social status of the expected guest, or because his coming was a break in the monotonous life at Weston, my uncle's hospitality broke out on a larger scale than was at first proposed, and he insisted upon inviting our rector to dinner, and the three Miss Dormers in the evening.

"It will please the elder sisters to dress up Miss Araby for company," he said, good-naturedly; "besides, she is a pretty lassie, and knows how to behave."

"Wait, my dear, until you know that Mr. Demarcay is coming to us. He may decline your invitation after all," suggested Aunt Edith.

We thought so too, and were foolish enough to experience some disappointment at the prospect. The next morning but one my uncle, in trimmer garb than usual, sallied forth soon after breakfast to pay his early visit. The grey coat was changed, but the corduroys were retained, and a smart blue scarf was knotted sailor fashion round his neck. A black straw hat a little awry, with a strong tendency to fix itself at the back of his head, completed the costume, leaving exposed a well-bronzed face with the honest, open expression of a guileless character. The type to which he belonged is unhappily dying out, the numerous so-called refinements of artificial life being destructive to the simplicity and carelessness that go far to form it. Whatever impression my uncle's visit made on the stranger, his invitation to dinner was accepted, but he told us nothing more.

CHAPTER II.

I SHALL not easily forget that 25th of January. It was not a cold day for the time of year, and if the sun threw little warmth upon the earth, it fell with a soft brilliance upon the grey branches of the gaunt trees surrounding my uncle's domicile, a pretty residence, approached by a short avenue with a piece of ground in front planted with shrubs and evergreens, a large garden on one side, and farm buildings at the back and on the western end. Rosewood he called it, because, as he said, the name well expressed its twofold pretensions to commodiousness and beauty. Rosewood that day lost something of its usual quiet character, besides being nearly, and perhaps for the first time, the scene of contention between my uncle and aunt. To the surprise and vexation of the former, the dinner was to take place in the small room in which we were accustomed to have our meals when alone, the dining-room not having recovered the effects of a recent agricultural council, notwithstanding that all the approved means of fumigation had been applied. My uncle remonstrated, but my aunt on that point was firm. She knew the unpleasantness of stale tobacco, and that her guest, unlike herself, had no one to please by ignoring personal comfort.

"Well, well, I suppose I must yield," said my uncle, after a stout resistance. "The women will be commanders on shore; but if I live a hundred years I shall always say that this Frenchman is a prig."

"You won't do that, darling dad, unless you give up your pipe," said Agnes, throwing her arms in her coaxing manner round his neck. "Ella and I read the other day that no centenarian ever smoked."

In spite of our united remonstrances, Uncle Worsley persisted the whole day in applying the unflattering epithet to Mr. Demarcay, unpremeditatedly impressing us unfavourably with regard to him. Impressions are so easily and sometimes so senselessly made; happily, one layer soon effaces the other in the soft stratum of the youthful mind, whatever durability may characterise them in the harder nature of our elders. Before the dinner-hour arrived, curiosity had done its work upon the daughters of Eve. My aunt was equally interested with Agnes and myself in divining what the expected guest would be like, having, with all our questionings, only succeeded in wringing contradictory testimonies from my uncle. He was good-looking enough, perhaps, but there was no attraction in a dandy; he was not exactly proud, but he thought himself something more than other people; he was not serious; he smiled readily enough; finally, he had a certain cut about him, but—and this my uncle re-echoed—he was an unmitigated prig.

Our good rector arrived a quarter of an hour before the time, and, standing with my uncle on the hearth-rug, was giving some fragmentary information about the Demarcays, having slightly known the mother of Miss Clayton's nephew, when at five minutes before five there was a ring, followed by a shuffling of feet and a murmur of voices in an undertone, as that lady took off her clogs before vanishing into an adjoining room to shake out her skirts and put on her cap.

In a few minutes our young maid opened the door, and either forgot to close it upon the ill-matched couple, or wished to have her curiosity gratified. We quite pardon Miss Clayton if she looked a little proud as she entered, with head erect, on her nephew's arm,

two inches taller than usual, her shoulders covered with a rich crimson crape shawl that set off her long-worn black silk dress, and certainly had never before been seen in Weston. Mr. Demarcay advanced about three steps with her, then, withdrawing his arm, bent low, as if entering the presence of majesty itself. The introductions were speedily made, and Mr. Demarcay bent lower even than before, and with a grace that could not fail to win the admiration of the ladies, though by my uncle's manner, which was more bluff than usual, I knew he was secretly repeating the epithet he had fixed upon him. My aunt's pretty face, her gentle voice and ways, could not fail to please. Evidently he had expected nothing so sweetly attractive as either mother or daughter, the worthy specimen he had seen in the morning having prepared him for a more homely family. Very quietly, but very minutely, he examined us all. When my turn was over, and he appeared to be giving all his attention to Aunt Edith, I returned the compliment. What I saw was a man in the very noon of life, on whom care seemed to have set its mark, with dark hazel eyes, soft and pleading, with a strange restlessness in them, as if seeking something they could never find. The long-fringed lids rose and fell, revealing occasionally depths of feeling, or a capacity for sentiment, but the ineffable charm of peace was altogether wanting. When I add that a nameless grace and refinement pervaded his whole appearance and manners, it may be thought that my youthful discernment was at fault, or caught by the first novelty. I think not; a sense of justice was strong in me. To judge impartially was my desire, yet I cannot say that my uncle's pertinacious depreciation of our visitor did not make me more alive to his merits than I should otherwise have been. Force the pendulum of judgment too much in one direction, it is sure to swing with equal power to the other. The fact is that Mr. Demarcay captivated us all. He took pains to be agreeable, and he was one of those to whom success in such a matter was easy.

Our rector was speedily on a friendly footing with him. He had known his mother, and where there is any good in a man at all, the sacred character of the maternal tie leaves behind a sweetness which never entirely passes away. They talked easily and pleasantly. I am bound to add that I saw no airs of pretension about Mr. Demarcay, nor any approach to the character which my uncle had given him, either at the dinner or in the course of the evening. When the gentlemen joined us the Miss Dormers had arrived, and Miss Arabby, more simple and juvenile in her dress than usual, sat on a footstool near the fire beside Miss Clayton. She rose with playful confusion at being caught in so careless an attitude, but suffered herself to be persuaded to keep her seat, and blushed very prettily when his sisters explained to Mr. Demarcay that the captain spoilt her, and that they did too; for was she not the treasure of their home, the youngest and last of a numerous family, who, with the exception of themselves, had all died young? I can hardly explain it, yet Miss Arabella Dormer, though nine years my senior, always looked upon me as an elder. Her light-brown hair was of the same shade as my own, and our height was nearly equal. The rest of our features differed as completely as our dispositions; her blue eyes were much softer than my hazel ones, and the peach-like tint upon her cheek was more attractive than the colourless white of my com-

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What says the poet :—

" Grace was in all her steps, heaven in her eye,
In every gesture dignity and love."

Dignity without grace is repellent, though we do not like to say so, and moves us no more than the chiselled marble, which, with all its beauty, is little likely to touch the heart.

When tea had been served Miss Araby was asked to sing, and, after a little show of bashfulness, consented. She made the mistake of selecting an Italian air, with several lights and shades. Mr. Demarcay must have heard it sung by the best Italian singers; it could not be expected that he should listen with any feeling but indifference, if, indeed, that far-away look in his eyes did not indicate absence of mind. He smiled applause with the rest as Araby finished, and really looked surprised when, on my uncle summoning me to follow her example, I declined, with a decision that, to say the least, was abrupt.

" Then Agnes shall sing—my little ring-dove will always coo to please her old father." Turning towards Mr. Demarcay, my uncle added, " She sings well for her age, and has had no other mistress than her cousin."

My dear uncle was determined to parade the acquirements of his family, utterly ignorant how very limited they must appear in the eyes of a man of the world. There was no refusing him, so yielding with the best grace I could command, I accompanied my cousin, and was soon obliged, through her timidity, to sustain her quavering voice with my own. The little preliminary scene had probably recalled the absent part of our guest, for he walked towards us when the song was ended, and suggested to Agnes that the best way to gain courage to sing in company was to accustom herself to regard her audience as a garden of stocks.

" And you, Miss Clare," he added, " why would not you sing? So good a teacher cannot be an indifferent performer."

" I really thought that our simple style would not afford pleasure to one who is familiar with the best."

" Ella sings delightfully," put in my enthusiastic cousin, her face turning rosy-red at her own energy.

" She has a warm admirer of her musical talent in you," observed Mr. Demarcay, with a very sweet smile on the lip, yet which in no wise lighted up his countenance.

" I believe you!" cried Agnes, who sometimes slipped into her father's phraseology, " Ella is every thing that is good, and the most helpful spirit of the house. Even my father could not get on without her. Besides attending to my education, she keeps his accounts, and knows the market price of wheat, and a number of other things too."

Called away by my aunt, I left the two together, and feared that Agnes took that opportunity of launching into a panegyric on me and my capabilities. Knowing her partiality, I am inclined to think it was not a wise one. She stoutly repudiated after-

wards the accusation of having bored him, stating in her defence that after every answer he asked her some fresh question, and seemed more and more interested in her replies.

A tray containing the requisite for preparing my uncle's grog put an end to the evening. The Miss Dormers for this time preferred keeping their gentility *intact*, and declined partaking. So after a little time there was nothing else to be done but for the party to break up, the Miss Dormers observing that as they were going the same way, Miss Clayton and Mr. Demarcay might have the benefit of their lantern. A man of Mr. Demarcay's stamp walking home by the aid of the spinsters' lantern was an idea that amused me greatly. The ghost of a smile flitted across his own lips also, though he bowed his acknowledgment of the well-meant proposition. The ladies retired to accomplish a general taking off of caps, Miss Araby excepted, and a pinning-up of skirts, before donning the long mantles of a certain cut adapted for evening weather. When ready it was found that the rector had beguiled the visitor into an evening walk, and that the lantern and the lad who carried it completed the ladies' escort home. With the light that evening Mr. Demarcay disappeared also. He quitted Weston the following morning, leaving the valuable legacy of a new subject of conversation, which lasted beyond the proverbial nine days. A visitant from a sphere so different from our own could not come and go without kindling both curiosity and excitement.

When all was said twenty times over that could be said about the pleasure Miss Clayton must have had in her nephew's society, the page was turned, and for some weeks onward that lady was continually interrogated as to the probability of his return. That question lost its interest after a while, there being no variation in the answer. Miss Clayton had no idea. Would he not write to her? Miss Clayton thought not; they had never corresponded. The visit was an accident—Weston happening to be on the line of railway where her nephew's property was situated—a part, at least—which he had not visited since the death of his wife, four years ago. Further, there was nothing to tell; for want of fuel fire will at last go out of itself. The ephemeral interest in an event which seemed to have no link either in the past or future to connect it with the present died away at last, and Weston was obliged to amuse itself in its old tame fashion. My uncle's eccentricities of speech and manner helped a little, and the local news just then was favourable. There was a sudden arrival of babies in the parish. The wife of one of the small farmers in the neighbourhood had twins, and the same happened in a labourer's cottage, to the amusement of my uncle, who said " it never rains but it pours." The " little strangers " occupied the matrons, the widows, and the spinsters in planning for their welfare. Caudle, food, clothing, all was liberally supplied, and their future speculated upon in different ways.

One good lady suggested that the parish should adopt one of them in memory of the event, if the mother could be made willing to part with it. Its history and fate were debated by a select committee of ladies, who consulted together what name would connect the birth of the little stranger with their charitable intentions towards it. The point was never decided, for both the little lives were extinguished, the last only living three days, and the

only fact that remained for gossip was, that they were buried in one grave in the churchyard. In the summer of that same year our good rector was taken from us; that was a sad event, as he was deservedly beloved. In the changes attendant upon a loss of that description there is occupation enough for mind and tongue. We must think and speculate who is to succeed, and what sort of a man he will be. It is not, then, surprising that by the autumn Mr. Demarey's visit had passed into the chronicles of Weston, and was no more talked of, except at Rosewood, where he still formed for Agnes the ideal hero of a romance.

OLD ALMANACKS.

BY J. VERNON WHITAKER.

OF all useless lumber a lot of old almanacks might suggest themselves as typical of utter worthlessness. Almost any other sort of old book might by a remote chance contain a grain of forgotten truth, a serviceable fact or name, perhaps, that will settle some disputed point in literature or history. But an ancient chronicle of feasts and festivals, law terms, changes of the moon, and such like information, however useful at the time, can scarcely interest us after the events have passed. If we are to believe the chemists, however, sunbeams are in some mysterious way contained in cucumbers, even if we cannot extract them, and in spite of the proverb "As useless as an old almanack," something both useful and interesting may be obtained from these ancient milestones from the highway of time. The history of newspapers has been written, but not the history of almanacks, although, if antiquity is a merit, they certainly have a better claim to notice. At least one almanack, which existed up to within a year or two ago, was upwards of a century old before the most elderly of the daily papers was born. Poor Robin—the almanack in question—had a very bad character from its infancy, and instead of mending its ways as it grew older, it became worse and worse, so that the death of this aged offender was not at all to be regretted.

For many years the Stationers' Company enjoyed the monopoly of publishing almanacks conjointly with the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge. This of course was an effectual barrier against over-production, and when at length the company lost this privilege, they still managed to retain a virtual monopoly, by buying up all the almanacks which appeared to be profitable, so that for years afterwards theirs continued to be almost the only almanacks in use. A heavy stamp duty, which at one time was as much as fifteenpence on every copy, also operated to prevent the extension of the trade.

Nothing is due, however, to the Stationers' Company for the improvement which has taken place in almanacks. Year after year their publications continued to be ridiculous compounds of ignorance, superstition, and grossness; and it is not until the time of Lord Brougham and the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge that we find an almanack at all to be compared with the modern standard. In 1828 Charles Knight started the British Almanack and Companion; and though the element of cheapness belongs to much more recent times, almanacks, such as we know them, may be said to date from that commencement. It would not

only be tedious but impossible to enumerate all the almanacks, calendars, and diaries that have been issued for 1877, from the Irish giant, published by Thom, containing a city directory of Dublin and of half Ireland besides, down to the useful penny almanacks and local guides which at this season come into existence, like so many literary mushrooms, all over the country.

Within the last three or four weeks millions of almanacks have been distributed. What will be come of them? And what has become of the millions which were distributed last year? Nobody thinks of keeping an old almanack, and new ones are so easily obtained that they seem of little value. Yet everybody possesses an almanack, or at least has access to one, and everybody has occasion, more or less frequently, to consult one during the year. Supposing the world to be suddenly deprived of almanacks, pins, and lucifer matches, by themselves three insignificant articles, what a terrible amount of inconvenience their loss would entail. All middle-aged people can call to mind their youthful struggles with a flint and tinder-box, but the agony of sulphur fumes and wounded knuckles had been forgotten long before the removal of the stamp duty made cheap almanacks possible.

Thanks to chance, or to some unknown Dr. Dryasdust, we have before us a row of corpulent little volumes, each containing the almanacks of the year, from nearly two hundred years ago up to the advent of untaxed paper and print.

We open a volume whose sere and yellow leaves carry us back to the year 1687. King James II is on the throne, and is giving his subjects infinite trouble by his efforts to convert them to Romanism, while infamous Judge Jeffreys is still busily hanging and transporting all unfortunate creatures suspected of taking part in the Duke of Monmouth's rebellion. London is rapidly recovering from the terrible fire of twenty years before, and the Cathedral of St. Paul's begins to show the stately grandeur of its outlines beneath the maze of scaffoldings which envelope its just completed walls. We are in Paternoster Row, but we may look in vain for any signs of a bookshop. Signs there are in plenty, suspended before every house, but the mercers have taken possession of the street. A few booksellers have congregated in Little Britain, but Jacob Tonson's shop is in Chancery Lane. Thomas Guy, the founder of the hospital, has a shop where now the Mansion House stands, and Bernard Linton and Edmund Curll are names yet unknown. However, close at hand, at the sign of the Peacock, in St. Paul's Churchyard, Master Richard Clavel sells books, and here we may look over the new almanacks just issued by the Stationers' Company. No less than eleven have been published this year. First is "Merlinus Anglicus Junior, by Henry Coley, Student in Mathematics and Astrology," who claims to be the successor of William Lilly, also an astrologer and almanack-maker, just deceased.

The last of the lot is "Poor Robin, written by Poor Robin, Knight of the Burnt Island, a well-wisher to the Mathematicks."

The prophets must be less bold than usual, for we find that scarcely any of them, not even Coley, the quondam amanuensis of Lilly, ventures beyond predictions of rain or wind. Mr. Clavel, however, tells us that the times are dangerous, and the almanack-makers have to be circumspect in their language, for it is not long since John Gadbury, the astrologer, was in serious

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danger of being hanged, and a great many writers have lately lost their ears for giving too much freedom to their pens. He tells us one little bit of literary news, for he says that Master Isaac Newton, the learned mathematician, will presently publish a great work, the like of which, he has heard, has not been seen since the days of Aristotle. Not one of the astrologers, however, could see in the stars the promised fame of "Newton's Principia."

Coley is a poet as well as a student in mathematics. Here is a specimen of his composition for the month of November:—

"The Rivers swell now in the hollow flands
Of winding currents, whose proud surly Bands
Did keep them captive all the summer time,
But now in rage, over the Bands they climbe."

Something better than this might be expected from a man who professes to know whether the sun will shine next Christmas Day, but also he is a slave to fashion, and just then fashion demanded that astrologers should also be rhymers. He is hardly to be depended on for chronology, for while he gives the date of the building of Solomon's Temple as 2,932 years after the creation, the building of London is given at 2,843, or eighty-nine years earlier, and the foundation of Cambridge University some forty years before the first Punic War. A chronological table of remarkable events in the history of the world was commonly given in all the almanacks, and as the same ludicrous blunders occur in each, they must all have been copied from a common source. The table, minus the blunders, is still to be found in almanacks of the present day. The calendar is also arranged just as at present, printed in red and black, but the touch of nature which proves the kinship of ancient and modern almanacks is to be found in the advertisements. Two hundred years ago we find the patent medicine vendors advertising their nostrums in almost the identical terms employed by their modern representatives.

John Gadbury, who was so nearly hanged during the anti-Catholic panic created by the mendacious revelations of Titus Oates, indulges in a few wild predictions concerning the weather, but his chief effort is to demonstrate how the time of Easter may be truly found. From a reference in his introductory address, it appears that a difference occurred in the previous year between the makers of the Aberdeen and Edinburgh almanacks as to when the season should be observed. Gadbury is a devout Catholic, and gives a regular calendar of the saints. He is also an equally devout admirer of royalty, for he also gives the names and birthdays of almost every prince and princess in Europe.

Merlinus Verax is chiefly remarkable for the chronological account it gives of the progress of events from the beginning of 1678, when Oates began his operations, to June, 1683, when the Rye-house Plot was discovered, on the very day that the judges decided it to be lawful for the franchises and liberties of the city of London to be seized into the king's hands. The "Chapman's Almanack" gives a useful list of fairs, market-days, post-roads, and similar information likely to be of use to travelling salesmen, and as if the author expected his readers to be more than usually shrewd and matter-of-fact, he is particularly cautious with his weather prophecies. Between the 4th and the 21st of January he has only one prediction—"frost and dry weather"—

and it would indeed be wonderful if it should not be verified on at least one day in that interval. Again, in July, he has at the beginning of the month "high wind;" later on, "seasonable;" still later, "rain;" and at the end, "windy," four very safe guesses, particularly the second one. All the prophets took care to allow a considerable margin of time for the verification of their predictions, and they could always fall back upon the defence that if it failed to rain in one place, rain unquestionably fell at another, and the stars did not distinguish between York and London.

The last of the batch is "Poor Robin," which originally made its appearance in 1662, four years before the Great Fire of London. Poor Robin, with all its faults, had at least the good sense to laugh at astrology and its professors, and, in spite of its coarseness, it very often gives sound advice to its readers. The following lines on the title-page indicated its character:—

"We don't predict by our Stargazing Art
Things which are yet to come for to impart.
Knowing it is a surer way to Rome
At things on past, than those which are to come.
Yet for all this we are not quite so silly
But know as much as Dade, Pond, or Will Lilly."

His address "To the Understanding Reader" is also characteristic, and attests a certain truth about the opinion of booksellers, which time has not changed. He begins: "Gentlemen,—This is now the twenty-fifth year since first I began to write Poor Robin's Almanack, and if you will believe the Booksellers, it hath been written well, whose Maxim is,

That Author above all the rest
Whose book sells most, doth write the best.

Which made old Sparks the Bookseller to say, when he was cited unto the High Commission Court for printing a Book which Reflected on the Bishop, My Lord (says he) it is a very good Book, a very good Book, it sells well." It is something in favour of the times that an almanack which openly ridiculed astrology should have sold well, but the real secret of its success, it is to be feared, was in its rude and frequently licentious humour. Poor Robin was a poet, as a matter of course, and the following verse, for April, will give some idea of his style:—

"The Citizens' Trumpeter, the Cuckow, he
Chants forth his ditty now with melody;
Of Curds and Cream then let him have his choice
Left he grow hoarse, and fo do lose his voice."

In the column which in most of his contemporaries are filled with predictions, Poor Robin gives "Observations," those for April commencing, "This is a very Fickle month, and therefore no more like a Constant Month than an Aple is like an Oyster. Many People shall be desirous to marry, but when they have a wife, know no more what to do with her than a Taylor know how to make a Horse shoo." All the almanacks of the period were divided into two parts, either of which could be used without the other. The first usually consisted of the calendar, with astronomical tables, etc., and the latter of the more elaborate stellar calculations and predictions. Poor Robin has a supplement, or companion, like the rest, including, among other things, an "Astrological Scheme." He tells his readers there will be two eclipses during the year. "The first of these

will be on the first of May, a little after noon or dinner time, if you go to dinner exactly at 12 of the clock, but if you do not dine till 2, then it will begin before dinner;" but of what the effects of the eclipse will be the author sensibly professes to know no more "than My Lord Mayor's Horse." This, however, is what the stars predict:—"Venus is in full square with Mars, therefore those who marry Widows must condescend to these conditions, viz. To Let her have the whole sway of the House, and all Domestical Affairs, placing and displacing the servants in general; To study and practice the art of jealousy; To feign anger melancholy or sickness to the life; To Reign govern or ordain Laws, and break them; Make Quarrels and maintain them; Profess Truths and devise Falshoods; protest obedience, but study nothing more than made their husbands so: To carry alwaies the inventory of her Goods, and the Sum of her Dowry perpetually in her mouth, and always be armed with the praise of the Deceased:

And he who is with such a Widow matcht
He in the Marriage Nooze is finely catcht."

Turning to another volume of the series, we find ourselves in the days of Queen Anne. The almanacks are for the year 1709. Constitutional Government has hardly yet taken definite shape, but it is slowly approaching the form which has since worked so admirably. The Act of Union with Scotland has relieved England from a constant source of danger, and laid the foundation of Scottish commerce. Marlborough's victories on the Continent have raised the military fame of England to a point never surpassed. Dryden is dead, but Addison, Pope, Steele, and a host of other writers, are contributing to create the "Augustan Age" of our literature. Few signs of literary elegance, however, are to be found in the almanacks, while, if we are to judge of the readers by what was provided for them, their superstition was more intensely foolish than ever. Of the thirteen published this year, five are new since 1687. The list includes the Lady's Diary, Andrewe's, Coley's, Dove's, Gadbury's, Gibson's, Moore's, Partridge's, Pond's, Poor Robin's, Saunders's, Tanner's, and Wing's. Of the new ones, Moore's and Partridge's were destined to live the longest, the former, though much shorn of its glory, up to the present year. The Lady's Diary was famous for its mathematical problems, some of which would sadly puzzle the "fair girl graduates" at the Cambridge locals. Indeed, many of the problems which in later years appeared in this almanack involved a knowledge of the higher mathematics that a senior wrangler would not regard as contemptible. John Partridge was one of the boldest of the prophets, and his "Merlinus Liberatus" was much reverenced by the superstitious multitude. He was a thoroughgoing Whig, and perhaps his rancorous sallies against the Tory party may have had something to do with the popularity of his almanack. As the representative prophet of his time, he drew upon himself a severe but richly-merited article by Richard Steele in the "Spectator." After ridiculing the prophet and all his brother charlatans, the article solemnly predicted his death on the 29th of March, 1808. A second paper as solemnly gave the particulars of the death of the prophet. Partridge could not bring out an almanack in the middle of the year, so that he was compelled to wait until the end before he had an opportunity of contradicting the report. He was evidently very uncomfortable about

the prediction and its circumstantial fulfilment, and he is at some pains to prove himself living. He says: "You may remember there was a paper published predicting my death on the 29th of March at night, 1708, and after the day was past the same villain told the world I was dead, and how I died, and that he was with me at the time of my death." He then goes on to say that he is alive and well, and continues, "And that paper was said to be done by one Bickerstaff, Esq. But that was a sham name. It was done by an *Impudent Lying Fellow.*" How Steele must have laughed when he read this, and even the stately Addison could hardly have refrained from a smile to see a prophet in such a pickle. Partridge's Almanack died only two or three years ago, Zadkiel and other modern appeasers to ignorance and superstition occupying the ground.

Moore's Almanack, "Vox Stellarum," is much like Partridge's, and must have depended upon its predictions for its sale. Here is a specimen of his ingenuity for the month of March: "The last Lunation was a New Moon in the 10th House of the Heavens; where the bright and glorious lamp of the Sun suffered an Eclipse, in the last decade of *Pisces*, and will stir up Sedition and Cruelty in many places, especially by Soldiers, &c., and those places whose meridian the eclipse cuts, must show most of the Effects. Lewis, beware, thy Dominions are threatened with a storm, and thy great city Paris uneasy, and so is Lions also, with many other places." Like all oracles, Moore is careful to choose ambiguous language capable of being read in many different ways; and as Marlborough and the allies were preparing to open the campaign in the spring, it was hardly necessary to read the stars to discover the danger of the French king, or impending cruelty by soldiers. Like most of his craft, also, Moore carried on the double trade of doctor and fortune-teller, as described by himself in an advertisement appended to Coley's Almanack for the same year:—

"At the Sign of *Old Lilly*, near the *Old Barge-House* in *Christ Church Parish, Southwark*, at London, liveth *Francis Moore*, Licensed Physician and Student in Astrology, who by the blessing of God cures all sorts of Agues at one Dose, in young or old, when left off by others; he has an excellent Medicine for Fits in Young People or Children; has an excellent Worm Powder, and a famous tincture that gives immediate ease in the Collick and carries off all other pains in an instant, with other Medicines proper for most curable diseases. He gives judgement by the Astrological way, which is surest, without seeing the patient, &c. He defies all that fend to him out of the Country upon Befiefs of their own, that they would pay the postage, or expect no answser to what they write."

A distinguishing feature in Moore's Almanack, thus early in its career, is its "hieroglyphick," which, although much inferior in point of engraving, is quite as absurd and meaningless as the more elaborate designs of modern issues.

It would be possible to ramble through more of these old almanacks with the certainty of finding plenty of amusing scraps to remind us of the past, but space will not permit. The thought they naturally suggest is how simple our forefathers must have been to believe in the pretentious ignorance and patent trickery of the old astrologers. Yet it is as well not to boast too loudly about our superior wisdom, for one of the most wonderful, as well as most disgraceful, facts of the present age is that prophetic almanacks are yearly bought and read, and half believed in, by men and women who have not even the excuse of ignorance to justify their folly.



A SCENE IN WAR.

[From the Painting by Gustave Doré.]

A LONG, LONG, NIGHT.

AN ADVENTURE IN THE BLACK FOREST.

SOME years ago I "made a walking," as one of my German friends described it, through some of the most picturesque parts of the country bordering on the Rhine. I explored some of the beautiful valleys which branch out on either side of that river, following to its source, perhaps, some clear and rapid stream as it rushed along between the vine-clad hills, not caring much in what direction it might lead me, or where it might be my lot to rest at night. I was not particular about my lodgings in those days, and could put up contentedly at any clean wayside inn, or at some farmhouse or forest hut, where no inn was. The company I met with in the beerhouses often afforded me a great deal of amusement, and I listened with becoming gravity to discussions which took place over the tall glasses of beer and pipes of strong tobacco, about Karl Meyer's fat pig (or "sausage," as they called it by anticipation), which was slaughtered yesterday, or Hans Fleck's ditto, which was doomed for to-morrow. More than once I was invited to join a festal party, or committee of taste, "consisting of" blood-puddings, chitterlings, or sausage-soup, with perhaps a bottle of Rhine wine or a glass of extra good *lager-bier*. Thus I made many strange acquaintances, and one or two good friends, in the course of my peregrinations.

Among the latter was a fellow-countryman, an undergraduate of Oxford, out for his "long," bent upon hard reading with a tutor and his party, who were already settled at a quiet little place called Gernsbach, in the Black Forest, but loitering among the hills and waters of the Rhine country to "coal and get the steam up," as he called it, before going in again to cram. He was a good-natured, pleasant companion, and the days flew by so swiftly while we were together, that nearly half the vacation was over before he could resolve to bring his wanderings to a close and settle down to work. At Heidelberg he found letters which hastened his decision. "I must go to-morrow, old fellow," he said; "it's getting serious: the governor writes from Baden-Baden to say he has just arrived there with my mother and sister, and means to drive over in a day or two to Gernsbach, expecting, of course, to find me there; hopes he shall not interrupt my studies, and so on. A longer letter from the anxious mother, urging me not to work too hard, as my head is not strong (complimentary, isn't it?); says she persuaded the governor to come to Baden chiefly that she might look after me; wants me to go over and stay with them a day or two, or a week, if I can spare the time. I'll start by the first train to-morrow, and then write from Gernsbach and make a clean breast of it: stick to reading afterwards like the letter *r*. What shall you do?"

"Stick to walking like a *w*!"

"Then you may as well walk in my direction as in any other."

I told him I would do so, and look him up in the course of three or four days, most likely; and as we had already done Heidelberg, I went with him next morning to the railway station, and we parted company—*auf wiedersehen*.

I felt rather dull when he was gone, and an hour or two afterwards set off for Carlsruhe; but the road being uninteresting and flat, and my spirits rather

flat also, I took advantage of a country vehicle which overtook me, and arrived at Carlsruhe the same evening. Carlsruhe was decidedly dull, but I did my duty by it next morning. I radiated from the Schloss which occupies the centre of the town, traversed the principal streets, which branch out in straight lines from it, and returned to it again three or four times; then shouldered my knapsack and walked away from it for ever, by one of the southern spokes.

I soon found myself among the shades of the Schwarzwald and for some miles walked along a valley of the great pine forest, by the side of a lively stream, so narrow in some places that I could almost leap across it, in others broad and shallow, with great smooth stones in its bed, breaking the rushing waters into a hundred musical streamlets. Yet, floating along upon this little burn, for it was nothing more, I met from time to time long trains of timber rafts, each raft consisting of two or three huge balks of timber tied abreast, the whole being linked together fore and aft, and following each other in succession like an enormous chain. Two men standing upon the foremost raft, which was lighter than the rest, and formed only of a few rough boards, directed the navigation with long handspikes; and it was wonderful to see with what dexterity they guided their craft, avoiding the rocks which rose up in mid-channel, doubling the projecting banks, and following all the windings of the stream by a touch on this side or a thrust on that. Sometimes as they skimmed over the shallows the heavy timbers seemed to rise almost out of the water, but went on without slackening speed, thrust forward by the mass behind; and then again they would plunge headlong into some deep pool till the steersmen, or *fößer*, were knee-deep in water, and in danger, as it seemed to me, of being swept away altogether. Yet they stood firm, and plied their poles with coolness and discretion, and the huge balks swung along after them, and dived and rose again, and went on unchecked till all were out of sight. It was a service of some peril, for if the men had once lost their footing they must have been ground up between the rafts and stones almost inevitably; but for excitement and healthy athleticism, I never saw any exercise that could beat it. In the Neckar and the Rhine, where hundreds of these rafts are formed into one, with dwelling-houses built upon it, and a farmyard (and perhaps a garden and orchard), it is comparatively tame work; but on the narrow headlong streams of the Black Forest, swollen with heavy rains, I recommend "rafting" strongly to those of my fellow-countrymen who are tired of Alpine climbing or canoeing, and are in search of a new sensation.

At a place where the valley opened out a little, and the stream ran more gently, I found one of these raft trains anchored. The *fößer* were sitting on the bank at dinner; their enormous boots, which are the pride and glory of these people, and reach nearly to their middle, lay beside them, steaming in the sun. They wore leather breeches, supported by broad green bands, or gallowses, crossing their chests outside their thick warm shirts. They were tall powerful men, with great wild beards, and looked at me with dignified indifference as I approached. To

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my inquiry whence they had brought the timber, one of them answered, with a jerk of the head, "Thence yonder." Whither were they taking it? "Down stream."

"Dangerous travelling," I observed.

He looked at me as if he thought it might be—for me. I felt taken down, and answered meanly, "I would rather go on foot or by rail for my part."

"By rail?" he cried; "if you want *danger*, yes!"

"Not much danger there," I replied.

"No? the people who were smashed up yesterday would not say so."

"Yesterday! Where?"

"Don't know where; only heard of it as we were leaving Wildbad. Our men were talking about it there; a complete smash; that's all I know."

Although this information was of the vaguest, I could not divest myself of some anxiety about my friend Hartwell. I could get nothing further out of the men, except that there was a village "higher up," so I bade them good morning and went on.

The village proved to be only a group of woodmen's cottages, with, of course, a beerhouse, at which I halted. No one there had heard of any accident, and I went forward, after an hour's rest, and thought no more about it. Towards evening the sky became overcast and threatened rain; the valley too, which I was traversing, grew narrower and the road more tortuous; the sun set early behind the high steep hills, and no sign of any human habitation was to be seen. Hoping to get a better view of the situation, I left the path and climbed the hillside, where, after a long scramble, my progress becoming every moment more difficult, I was obliged to pause for breath. I was then nearly up to my knees in moss, rotten wood, and water, and surrounded on all sides by giant trees, which almost hid the heavens from my view. A dead silence reigned on all sides, broken only by the crumbling of the sticks and the squashing of the bog beneath my feet. As I went on, my path was barred from time to time by some enormous tree which had fallen half a century ago, and lay among its fellows a mass of touchwood, yet still preserving its round solid form, covered with moss and fungi. The gloom and solitude began to be oppressive, and I could not but feel uncomfortable at the prospect of being overtaken by the night in that solemn wilderness. I reached the top of the hill at last, but nothing was visible in any direction, except a repetition of the same gloomy scene, hill rising beyond hill, and pine-trees covering them in thick dark masses to their summits. After resting a few moments, I began to descend on the other side of the mountain, hoping to strike upon some road or foot-path lower down; but now I had turned my back upon the light, which lingered yet upon the heights, and was plunging into the valley, where the gloom became gradually more and more intense. It was my only chance, however, and the sound of running water at a great depth below served as a guide. When I at length reached the bottom of the glen rain was falling, and there was but just sufficient light for me to discern a narrow road skirting the stream, the same in appearance as that which I had quitted more than an hour before. I walked on now as quickly as I could, looking and listening anxiously for some token of human life or dwelling, but for a long time in vain. At length a light was visible, and I hastened towards it. A poor dilapidated building was before me, apparently the home

of some woodcutter or charcoal-burner; a light flickered dimly from an upper window; below all was dark and silent. I knocked at the door and lifted the latch, but could not open it. I shouted and thumped for some time without attracting any one's attention. At length my perseverance was rewarded; the casement was opened, and a shaggy head peered forth.

"Who's there?"

"A traveller."

"What do you want?"

"Shelter."

"Can't come in here."

"I must, and will."

"You can't, and won't."

"Is there any other house near?"

"Straight on."

"How far?"

"Right on I tell you, *gerade aus*." The window was violently slammed as these last words were spoken, and some of the loose glass fell from it and rattled down upon my head.

Hoping to find some better shelter at no great distance, I walked on again, though very wet and weary; but it was now so dark that I stumbled at every step, and narrowly escaped falling into the water. I returned, therefore, in despair to the lonely house, which I had some difficulty in finding, as the light had disappeared. Again I knocked at the door, and shouted, but this time could obtain no answer. I walked round the wretched building and tried the windows, but they were fastened. At the back of the house, however, there was a shed or stable, without any door; and, as the rain now fell heavily, I crept into it, and, feeling my way by the wall, found something like a manger, in which I lay down shivering. I reckoned that the moon would rise before midnight, and if the weather should clear up, I could then resume my journey. Fortunately, I had part of a sausage with me, my flask was not empty, and the night was not cold; so, after I had satisfied my hunger I felt more comfortable, and presently fell asleep. Like the unhappy Dido, I seemed "*semper longam incomitatus ire viam*," wandering alone through vast and dreary regions, plunging through quagmires, surrounded everywhere with mystery and horror. At length my way was stopped by an enormous pine-tree, clad in leather breeches and high boots, which laid its warm, soft hand upon my face and stopped my breath. I woke up half suffocated; the hand was still there, smooth, heavy, hot, resting upon my mouth; it seemed to choke me; yet, for a minute or more, I could not rouse myself, could not even stir a finger. I knew that I was awake, but the impression of the dream remained with the force of a nightmare. That warm, soft hand, however, was *no dream*: it moved, and then I struck at it. In an instant it was gone, and I heard it fall upon the floor with a thump, and rustle away among the rubbish—a rat! There were hundreds of these vermin in the place, for I heard them scrambling and squeaking on all sides; and I resolved to sleep no more, and lay still in my narrow bed, and wished, more ardently than ever, for the day. In spite of this determination I dozed off again, and dreamed this time that I was in my coffin, buried alive, with rats nibbling at my toes and fingers. In my efforts to escape I struck my elbows forcibly against the sides of the coffin, which opened and let me fall through into a rushing stream,

among great balks of timber; from these, I coolly argued with myself, the river had most probably derived its name; only I was not sure whether it ought to be spelt *Styx* or *Sticks*. Just then two figures approached with a lantern, and almost before I knew whether I was asleep or awake I heard one of them say, "There it is, hanging on the wall; fetch it down."

That was not the voice of Charon. I lay still and watched the intruders; they were tall, broad-shouldered men, and from their costume I judged that they were woodsmen, or flötiers. One of them took down a ladder from the wall.

"It's very old and rotten," he remarked, "but will perhaps serve the purpose. I can get the window open, I dare say, without disturbing him."

"He's a wonderful sleeper," said the other; "he snores like a sausage. It was a stupid thing of me to leave the bolt on the door. That bag is heavy, and has something in it."

"We shall get at it this way," said the other. "I'll go first, and you can follow me. If he should wake, why then— But I don't want to hurt him."

By this time they were outside the building, and I had crept out of my rude berth and was following them. The younger of the two took the ladder and placed it under one of the back windows of the house, while the other carried the lantern; the former then mounted, thrust in his hand through the broken glass, and opened the casement. With some difficulty he clambered through the narrow opening, and then turned and beckoned to his companion, who immediately followed him.

"Foul play here," I said to myself; "but what can I do? I'll have a look, at all events;" and creeping softly up the ladder, I peered into the chamber, now dimly lighted by the little candle. It was a miserable room, with scarcely an article of furniture in it; a quantity of straw, covered with a sack or two, lay in one corner, and stretched upon it was the figure of a man fast asleep, partly undressed, with only a loose coat or wrapper over him. The head rested upon what seemed to be a travelling-bag, and the sleeper was breathing heavily, or rather snoring in a stertorous manner.

The two men approached him stealthily, shading the light from his eyes, so that I could not see his face distinctly; they leant over him; I quietly and quickly passed one foot through the window, and then looked again. One of them had a knife in his hand, and seemed uncertain whether to make use of it or not; the other was carefully drawing away the travelling-bag from under the sleeper's head. I now quitted the ladder and got my other foot upon the floor, but in doing so struck my head against the top of the low window-frame. The two men started at the sound, and, seeing me standing near the window, appeared for a moment to be terror-stricken; but the elder of them soon recovered himself and rushed at me, knife in hand. I caught up a wooden stool, almost the only movable thing in the room, and drove the four rickety legs against his face. The other man had in the meantime rushed to the door and opened it; in another moment both had made their escape, carrying the candle with them, and I was alone with the sleeper and in total darkness.

I groped my way towards the door, but could not open it; indeed, I had heard a key turn in the lock after the men passed out; immediately afterwards the ladder was moved from the outside, and I

heard it grate along the wall and fall to the ground. I was a prisoner! My first thought was to awaken the sleeper, who had continued undisturbed by all this noise and tumult; I laid my hand upon him and shook him; he snored the louder; I spoke to him; he muttered incoherently; all my efforts to arouse him were of no avail. Had he been drugged? Were these men practised robbers? I thought not, for the remark which had passed between them in the stable seemed to imply that they were astonished at his long and heavy slumber. "He's a wonderful sleeper!" one of them had said. I was in great perplexity, not knowing how soon the robbers might return, bringing others with them.

"If I am locked in," I thought to myself, "you shall, at all events, be locked out;" so I crept to the door again and bolted it; then I sat down on the stool by the window and listened and watched. The heavy, stertorous breathing in the corner went on unceasingly; outside the rain kept pattering; neither moon nor stars appeared, and the darkness was intense. From time to time I heard voices below, as if in dispute; once a stealthy footstep ascended the stairs and listened at the door, and then again retired; by-and-by there was an opening of doors and a whispering of voices beneath the window; I expected to hear the ladder raised again, and was ready with my wooden stool to thrust down any one who should attempt the window; but the voices ceased, and footsteps were heard retreating.

"They are gone in search of others," I thought to myself; "they will return presently in force and renew their attack."

I was unarmed; everything that I possessed, even my clasp-knife, was left in the stable, in the pocket of my overcoat; my companion was helpless—worse than helpless. What could I do, single-handed, against even two such ruffians? They might break open the door in a moment if they chose: why should they not choose? Hour after hour passed by, however, and there was no further alarm. It seemed as if the miserable night would never end.

At length the rain ceased and the air began to grow colder. I then withdrew to the corner where my fellow-prisoner lay, still slumbering and snoring, and sat down near him. I placed my hand upon his forehead: it was cold and damp. I raised his head and propped it up as best I could, for I found that the travelling-bag which he had used for a pillow was gone; he then breathed more easily, but continued sleeping; his pulse was slow and feeble. As soon as the first glimmer of morning light appeared I tried to distinguish his features, but could only make out that he was young-looking, with dark wavy hair. As I peered out at the window, the gloomy hills rose before me like a wall; but the tops of the trees which crowned them were tipped with light; gradually every object became more distinct; I could see the roof of the stable in which I had spent the first hours of the night; then the yard below, with the ladder lying upon the ground; but no opening was apparent in the forest in any direction.

Turning to the interior again, I could now see the features of my sleeping partner more distinctly. I knelt down by his side; a sudden thought flashed through my mind; how like Frank Hartwell! Another moment, and I was convinced; it was he! As it grew lighter I observed that his eyes were

partly open and move still more by name; to be done cup of cold from the v could not thinking i the watch argued the conclusion violence th neither w since they probably left in the with their the door, could hear It was nov but c from the a to the gro sack was there wa grasped i No sign thieves ha hension, a night—" when, at little villa traveller distant p joy than was alrea labourers the place and ansu the churc than the reached i dressed iing listen him at o had prov necessary to the lo

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partly open, and that his lips were slightly parted, and moved with every breath. I raised his head still more and spoke to him gently, calling him by name; but he took no notice of me. What was to be done? I had nothing within reach, not even a cup of cold water; I might have climbed or dropped from the window and returned by the ladder; but I could not bear the thought of leaving him alone, thinking it possible that the enemy might be upon the watch, ready to take advantage; yet, as I argued the matter over in my mind, I came to the conclusion that if these men had really contemplated violence they would not have waited till the morning; neither was there any strong temptation for them, since they had carried off my friend's bag, and probably my own knapsack also, which had been left in the stable; in all probability they had fled with their booty, leaving the coast clear. I unbolted the door, but it was still locked. I listened, but could hear no sound either in the house or out of it. It was now seven o'clock. I lost no more time in hesitation, but crept through the window, hung for a moment from the sill by my hands, and then dropped safely to the ground. I looked into the stable; my knapsack was there, on the ground, open and empty; there was a stout ash stick lying in a corner; I grasped it and walked round the house to the road. No signs of life were visible. Satisfied that the thieves had fled, I left the spot without further apprehension, and hastened on, as I had been directed overnight—"straight forward." I had not gone a mile when, at a turn of the road, I saw the steeple of a little village church at a short distance from me. No traveller fainting in the desert ever beheld the distant palm-trees waving over their oasis with more joy than I experienced at that moment. The village was already astir as I entered it; I met two or three labourers, and asked them if there was a doctor in the place; but they were so long in understanding and answering, that I passed on impatient. Near the church was a house of rather more pretension than the rest, the door of which was open. As I reached it, the pfarrer, or curate, came out. I addressed myself to him, and found a ready, sympathizing listener. The doctor lived close by; we went to him at once, and when he had heard my story, and had provided himself with such things as he judged necessary, doctor and pfarrer went together with me to the lonely house.

"I thought this place had been unoccupied," said the former; "it was empty until lately; but there have been many strangers here during the last few weeks, in consequence of an extraordinary felling of timber; probably some of these had taken up their lodging there." I may as well state here that this conjecture was correct: the two men were flöters from a distance. They were afterwards traced by the police as far as Mannheim; but I never heard of them again, nor was any of the booty which they had carried off recovered. When we reached the house the door was found to be unfastened, and the lower room deserted; but it was necessary to enter by the window in order to unbolt the bedroom door. Hartwell was lying exactly as I had left him, still in a heavy sleep.

The doctor examined him carefully.

"Has he been drugged?" I asked.

"I think not; there has probably been a struggle, and he has received a blow upon the head: there is congestion of the brain; yet I can find no marks of

violence externally. How came he to this place, I wonder?"

I told him all I knew, namely, that he had left me on Tuesday at Heidelberg, starting for Gernsbach by the early train.

"The train from Heidelberg on Tuesday!" he exclaimed; "that was the train that came into collision near Etlingen. Your friend has had a shaking, if nothing worse; but what has brought him here?"

After some reflection I hit upon what proved to be a true solution of the mystery. The line, they told me, had been blocked for many hours. I knew Hartwell's impatient temper, and his anxiety to get on without delay to Gernsbach. Though stunned for a moment by the collision, he had soon recovered, and was not sensible of any serious injury; with rest and quietness no harm perhaps would have followed; but he set off to walk, and the exertion brought on graver symptoms. Unable to proceed any farther, he had, like myself, sought refuge in the raftsmen's cottage, where he must have arrived twenty-four hours or more before I found him. Another day without assistance must have been fatal; but there was hope of his recovery now. Under the doctor's direction a litter was constructed, and the injured man conveyed to the village, where a comfortable room was soon made ready for him. A messenger was sent to Baden with a letter for "the governor," who arrived at Gernsbach the same afternoon with his daughter and wife—his wife and daughter, I mean. It was some days (weeks, now I think of it, but they seemed like days to me) before Frank Hartwell was sufficiently restored to leave the village. His sister nursed him tenderly, and I used to spend a good deal of time in his room; but the best time of all was in the evenings, when she went out for an hour or two to breathe the fresh air, and to stroll through the woods, while her mother staid at home in charge of the invalid. The "governor" had returned to Baden-Baden after the first day or two, and those solitary paths among the pine-trees were very quiet and refreshing. There was a balminess in the air, a music in the running stream, a delicious sentiment, if I could express my meaning, in the varying tints of autumn, which I never had experienced before. The evenings closed in too rapidly, however, which is the only drawback to that season of the year.

"O, dass sie ewig grünen bliebe,
Die schöne Zeit der jungen Liebe!"

It is still green for me, and will be green for ever in my memory. The first moment that I saw Kitty Hartwell, as she alighted from the carriage at Gernsbach, in her anxiety and sorrow, my heart leaped up in my bosom: the music and pathos of her voice, as she thanked me so warmly, with tears in her eyes, for the care I had bestowed upon her brother (my brother now), lingered in my ears like a spell. She is the purest-minded, the most affectionate, loving—But she is looking over my shoulder as I write this, and I must stop, or she will perhaps lay hands upon it, and either tear it to pieces, or more probably lock it up among her secret treasures. I do not take many long walks now; I am much more particular about my night's lodging than I used to be; I have never slept in a stable, nor in anything so narrow as a manger, since that long, long, night, and I sincerely hope I shall never have such a cold, uncomfortable, lonesome bed again.

Almanack for 1877.

JANUARY.

1 M	rises 8.8 A.M.	9 T	rises 8.6 A.M.	17 W	near Saturn	25 T	rises 7.50 A.M.
2 T	Capella S. 10.17 P.M.	10 W	Twilight ends 6.15 P.M.	18 T	rises 7.59 A.M.	26 F	Jupiter a morning star
3 W	Clock before 3 4m. 56s.	11 S	Hilary Law Sitts, beg.	19 F	Orion S. to 10 P.M.	27 S	Clock bef. 13m. 7s.
4 T	sets 4.3 P.M.	12 F	Venus the morning star	20 S	Daybreak 5.55 A.M.	28 S	SEPTAGESIMA SUN.
5 F	Dividends due at Bank	13 S	Cam. Lent Term begins	21 S	3 SUNDAY AFT. EPIPH.	29 M	Full 10 8.39 A.M.
6 S	Epiphany. 1 3 Quarter	14 S	2 S. AF. EPIPH. New 1	22 M	1 Quarter 3.53 P.M.	30 T	Sirius S. 10 P.M.
7 S	1 SUNDAY AFT. EPIPH.	15 M	Oxford Lent Term beg.	23 T	Length of Day 8h. 58m.	31 W	sets 4.45 P.M.
8 M	Fire Insurances expire	16 T	sets 4.19 P.M.	24 W	sets 4.33 P.M.		[Day's increase 1h. 19m.]

FEBRUARY.

1 T	rises 7.40 A.M.	8 T	Half-Quarter Day	15 T	rises 7.16 A.M.	22 T	rises 7.2 A.M.
2 F	Ven. and Jup. morn. stars	9 F	rises 7.27 A.M.	16 F	Capella near Zen. 7 P.M.	23 F	Sirius S. 8.30 P.M.
3 S	Clock before 14m. 8s.	10 S	greatest dist. from ⊕	17 S	Daybreak 5.18 A.M.	24 S	Clock before 13m. 25s.
4 S	SEXAGESIMA SUNDAY	11 S	SHROVE SUNDAY	18 S	1 SUNDAY IN LENT	25 S	2 SUNDAY IN LENT
5 M	3 Quarter 5 A.M.	12 M	Orion due S. 8 P.M.	19 M	Gemini S. 9.30 P.M.	26 M	3 least distance from ⊕
6 T	Pleiades S. 6.30 P.M.	13 T	New 1 8.59 A.M.	20 T	Twilight ends 7.16 P.M.	27 T	1 Full and eclipsed 7 P.M.
7 W	Length of Day 28m.	14 W	Ash Wednesday	21 W	1 Quarter 4.15 A.M.	28 W	Day's increase 3h. 2m.
	[sets 4.58 P.M.]		[sets 5.11 P.M.]		[sets 5.24 P.M.]		[sets 5.36 P.M.]

MARCH.

1 T	Mars near Jupiter	9 F	rises 6.20 A.M.	16 F	Leo due S. 10 P.M.	24 S	Oxford Lent Term ends
2 F	sets 6.44 A.M.	10 S	greatest distance from ⊕	17 S	5 SUNDAY IN LENT	25 S	PALM SUN. Lady Day
3 S	Clock before 12m. 58s.	11 S	SUNDAY IN LENT	18 M	Length of Night 12h.	26 M	3 least distance from ⊕
4 S	3 SUNDAY IN LENT	12 M	Daybreak 4.30 A.M.	19 T	Length of Day 12h. 3m.	27 T	sets 5.45 A.M.
5 M	Length of Day 11h. 7m.	13 T	Gemini S. 8 P.M.	20 T	1 Quarter 7.37 P.M.	28 W	sets 5.24 P.M.
6 T	3 Quarter 10.1 P.M.	14 W	Twilight ends 7.57 P.M.	21 W	2 Quarter 1.9 P.M.	29 T	Full 1 4.36 P.M.
7 W	sets 5.49 P.M.	15 T	New 1 2.54 A.M.	22 T	3 Quarter 7.16 P.M.	30 F	GOOD FRIDAY
8 T	near Mars and Jup.			23 F	Camb. Lent Term ends	31 S	Day's increase 5h. 4m.

APRIL.

1 S	EASTER SUNDAY	8 S	Low SUNDAY	15 S	2 SUNDAY AFT. EASTER	23 M	3 least distance from ⊕
2 M	Bank and Gen. Holiday	9 M	Fire Insurances expire	16 M	sets 6.56 P.M.	24 T	sets 7.9 P.M.
3 T	sets 6.44 A.M.	10 T	rises 5.17 A.M.	17 S	rises 5.1 A.M.	25 W	sets 4.45 A.M.
4 W	Oxford East. Tm. beg.	11 W	Clock before 12m. 59s.	18 W	Daybreak 2.49 A.M.	26 T	Clock after 12m. 20s.
5 T	Divs. due. 1 3 Quarter	12 T	Mars and Jupiter morn.	19 T	Length of Day 14h. 3m.	27 F	Full 1 4.36 P.M.
6 S	Camb. Easter Tm. beg.		stars	20 T	1 Quarter 7.37 P.M.	28 S	sets 7.16 P.M.
7 F	greatest distance from ⊕	13 F	New 1 5.30 P.M.	21 S	2 Quarter 1.9 P.M.	29 S	4 SUNDAY AFT. EASTER
8 S		14 S	Regulus S. 8.30 P.M.	22 S	3 SUNDAY AFT. EASTER	30 M	Day's increase 6h. 57m.

MAY.

1 T	near Jupiter	9 W	rises 4.10 A.M.	17 T	greatest distance from ⊕	25 F	rises 3.57 A.M.
2 W	rises 4.31 A.M.	10 T	Ascension Day	18 F	Oxf. East. Term ends	26 S	Scorpio S. midnight
3 T	Clock after 3m. 17s.	11 S	Length of Day 15h. 30m.	19 S	Oxf. Trin. Term begins	27 S	TRINITY SUNDAY. 1
4 F	near Mars	12 S	Corona S. midnight	20 S	WHIT SUN. 1 Qu.		Full 4.5 A.M.
5 S	3 Qu. 11.19 A.M.	13 S	AF. ASCEN. New 1	21 M	Bank and General Hol.	28 M	near Jupiter
6 M	ROGATION SUNDAY	14 M	Twilight ends 10.45 P.M.	22 T	Arcturus S. 10 P.M.	29 T	Clock aft. 12m. 51s.
7 T	Mars and Jup. morn.str.	15 T	Daybreak 1.7 A.M.	23 W	sets 7.54 P.M.	30 W	sets 8.3 P.M.
8 F	sets 7.32 P.M.	16 W	sets 7.44 P.M.	24 T	Q. Victoria born 1819	31 T	Day's increase 8h. 27m.

JUNE.

1 F	rises 3.50 A.M.	9 S	rises 3.45 A.M.	17 S	3 SUN. AFTER TRINITY	25 M	Full 1 4.53 P.M.
2 S	greatest distance from ⊕	10 S	2 SUN. AFTER TRINITY	18 M	1 Quarter 6.24 A.M.	26 T	sets 3.46 A.M.
3 S	1 SUN. AFTER TRINITY	11 M	New 1 2.32 P.M.	19 T	sets 3.44 A.M.	27 W	Venus ev. st. in N.W.
4 M	3 Quarter 5.11 A.M.	12 T	Length of N. 7h. 30m.	20 W	Acc. of Q. Vict. 1837	28 T	Clock before 12m. 58s.
5 T	Hercules S. midnight	13 W	greatest distance from ⊕	21 T	1 Cent. Canc. Sun. beg.	29 F	greatest dist. from ⊕
6 W	Clock aft. 3m. 36s.	14 T	Jupiter S. 0.24 A.M.	22 F	Cam. East. Term ends	30 S	sets 8.18 P.M.
7 S	Mars morn. star in E.	15 F	Length of D. 16h. 32m.	23 S	sets 8.19 P.M.		[All day or twilight in June.]
8 F	sets 8.12 P.M.	16 S	sets 8.17 P.M.	24 S	4 SUN. AFTER TRINITY		

Almanack for 1877.

JULY.

1 S	5 SUN. AFTER TRINITY	9 M	Fire Insurances expire	17 T	D 1 Quarter 1.12 P.M.	24 T	⊕ sets 7.58 P.M.
2 M	⊕ rises 3.50 A.M.	10 T	New D 10.6 P.M.	18 W	⊕ rises 4.6 A.M.	25 W	Full D 7.00 A.M.
3 T	D 3 Quarter 9.2 P.M.	11 W	⊕ near Venus	19 T	Mars due S. 3.37 A.M.	26 T	⊕ rises 4.16 A.M.
4 W	⊕ grst. distance from ⊕	12 T	⊕ least distance from ⊕	20 F	Clock before ⊕ 6m. 5s.	27 F	⊕ grst. distance from ⊕
5 T	Dividends due at Bank	13 F	⊕ rises 4.0 A.M.	21 S	⊕ near Jupiter	28 S	⊕ near Mars and Saturn
6 F	⊕ sets 8.16 P.M.	14 S	Venus in N.W. 8 P.M.	22 S	8 SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY	29 S	9 SUN. AFTER TRINITY
7 S	Oxford Trin. Tm. ends	15 S	7 SUN. AFTER TRINITY	23 M	TRINITY	30 M	⊕ sets 7.49 P.M.
8 S	6 SUN. AFTER TRINITY	16 M	⊕ sets 8.8 P.M.	23 M	Jupiter the evening star	31 T	Day's decrease rh. 10m.

AUGUST.

1 W	⊕ rises 4.26 A.M.	9 T	New D 5.17 A.M.	17 F	D near Jupiter	25 S	⊕ near Mars and Saturn
2 T	D 3 Quarter 10.21 A.M.	10 F	⊕ rises 4.39 A.M.	18 S	⊕ rises 4.52 A.M.	26 S	13 SUN. AFTER TRINITY
3 F	Venus sets 8.38 P.M.	11 S	Half-Quarter Day	19 S	12 SUN. AFTER TRINITY	27 M	⊕ rises 5.6 A.M.
4 S	Clock before ⊕ 5m. 49s.	12 S	11 SUN. AFTER TRINITY	20 M	Length of Day 14h. 16m.	28 T	Clock before ⊕ 1m.
5 S	10 SUN. AFTER TRINITY	13 M	Mars and Jup. even. st.	21 T	Twilight ends 9.25 P.M.	29 W	Cygnus S. 10 P.M.
6 M	Bank and Gen. Holiday	14 T	Daybreak 2.18 A.M.	22 W	Mars due S. 1.16 A.M.	30 T	⊕ sets 6.50 P.M.
7 T	Aquila S. 10.40 P.M.	15 W	D 1 Quarter 10.28 P.M.	23 T	D Full and eclpd. 11 P.M.	31 F	D 3 Quarter 9.15 P.M.
8 W	⊕ sets 7.34 P.M.	16 T	⊕ sets 7.19 P.M.	24 F	⊕ sets 7.3 P.M.		(Day's decrease 3h.)

SEPTEMBER.

1 S	⊕ rises 5.14 A.M.	9 S	15 SUN. AFT. TRINITY	17 M	⊕ rises 5.40 A.M.	25 T	⊕ rises 5.53 A.M.
2 S	14 SUN. AFT. TRINITY	10 M	⊕ rises 5.29 A.M.	18 T	Jupiter S. at sunset	26 W	Venus sets 6.48 P.M.
3 M	Venus sets 7.32 P.M.	11 T	Length of Day 12h. 52m.	19 W	Twilight ends 8.0 P.M.	27 T	Cygnus S. 8 P.M.
4 T	Clock after ⊕ 1m. 11s.	12 W	Mars and Jup. ev. stars	20 T	Pegasus S. 11 P.M.	28 F	⊕ sets 5.43 P.M.
5 W	Mars grst. brilliancy	13 T	Daybreak 2.18 A.M.	21 F	Clock after ⊕ 45s.	29 S	Michaelmas Day
6 T	⊕ least dist. from ⊕	14 F	D 1 Qu. 2.18 A.M.	22 S	Full D 3.35 P.M.	30 S	18 SUN. AFTER TRINITY
7 F	New D 10.40 P.M.	15 S	⊕ sets 6.13 P.M.	23 S	17 SUN. AFT. TRINITY	31 S	D 3 Quarter. Day's decrease 4h. 56m.
8 S	⊕ sets 6.29 P.M.	16 S	16 SUN. AFT. TRINITY	24 M	⊕ sets 5.52 P.M.		

OCTOBER.

1 M	Cam. Mich. Term. beg.	9 T	⊕ near Venus	16 T	⊕ sets 5.3 P.M.	24 W	⊕ sets 4.47 P.M.
2 T	⊕ rises 6.4 A.M.	10 W	Oxf. Mich. Term beg.	17 W	D greatest dist. from ⊕	25 T	⊕ rises 6.44 A.M.
3 W	Clock before ⊕ 1m. 45s.	11 T	⊕ rises 6.19 A.M.	18 T	D near Mars and Jup.	26 F	Twilight ends 6.37 P.M.
4 T	⊕ least distance from ⊕	12 F	Length of Day 10h. 51m.	19 F	⊕ rises 6.33 A.M.	27 S	Clock before ⊕ 16m. 5s.
5 W	Mars grst. brilliancy	13 T	Fire Insurances expire	20 S	Venus sets 6.50 P.M.	28 S	22 SUN. AFT. TRINITY
6 T	New D 9.58 P.M.	14 S	10 SUN. AFTER TRINITY	21 S	21 SUN. AFT. TRINITY	29 M	D 1 Qu. 2.21 P.M.
7 S	⊕ sets 5.21 P.M.	15 M	D 1 Quarter 3.42 A.M.	22 M	Full D 7.31 A.M.	30 T	⊕ sets 4.35 P.M.
8 M	⊕ sets 5.21 P.M.	15 M	Daybreak 4.32 A.M.	23 T	Mars due S. 8.43 P.M.	31 W	Day's decrease 6h. 54m.

NOVEMBER.

1 T	⊕ rises 6.56 A.M.	9 F	Prince of Wales born.	16 F	⊕ sets 4.7 P.M.	24 S	⊕ sets 3.58 P.M.
2 F	Mich. Law Sitt. begin	10 S	Lord Mayor's Day	17 S	⊕ rises 7.24 A.M.	25 S	26 SUN. AFTER TRINITY
3 S	Mars very near Saturn	11 S	⊕ rises 7.12 A.M.	18 S	25 SUN. AFTER TRINITY	26 M	⊕ rises 7.39 A.M.
4 M	23 SUN. AFTER TRINITY	12 S	24 SUN. AFTER TRINITY	19 M	Length of Day 8h. 36m.	27 T	D 3 Quarter 10.5 P.M.
5 M	New D 8.48 A.M.	12 T	D 1 Quarter 11.44 P.M.	20 T	Full D 10.19 P.M.	28 W	Clock bef. ⊕ 1m. 47s.
6 T	Clock bef. ⊕ 16m. 15s.	13 T	⊕ grst. distance from ⊕	21 W	Taurus due S. midnight	29 T	Mars S. 7.6 P.M.
7 W	⊕ sets 4.21 P.M.	13 W	⊕ near Saturn	22 S	Daybreak 5.30 A.M.	30 F	⊕ sets 3.53 P.M.
8 T	⊕ nr. Venus and Jupiter	14 T	Orion in S.E. in evening	23 F	Twilight ends 6.1 P.M.		[Day's decrease 8h. 26m.]

DECEMBER.

1 S	Princes. of Wales b. 1844	9 S	2 SUNDAY IN ADVENT	17 M	Oxford Mich. Tm. ends	25 T	CHRISTMAS DAY
2 S	1 SUNDAY IN ADVENT	10 M	⊕ rises 7.58 A.M.	18 T	⊕ rises 8.4 A.M.	26 W	Bank and Gen. Holiday
3 M	⊕ rises 7.49 A.M.	11 T	⊕ grst. distance from ⊕	19 W	Orion due S. midnight	27 T	D 3 Quarter 6.20 A.M.
4 T	New D 10.4 P.M.	12 W	D 1 Quarter 9.34 P.M.	20 T	Full D 11.51 A.M.	28 F	⊕ rises 8.9 A.M.
5 W	Clock before ⊕ 9m. 5s.	13 T	D near Mars	21 F	⊕ enters Capricorn	29 S	⊕ sets 3.56 P.M.
6 T	⊕ near Jupiter	14 F	⊕ sets 3.49 P.M.	22 S	Daybreak 6 A.M.	30 S	1 SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS.
7 F	⊕ sets 3.49 P.M.	14 S	Cam. Mich. Term ends	23 S	4 SUNDAY IN ADVENT		
8 S	⊕ near Venus	15 S	3 SUNDAY IN ADVENT	24 M	⊕ sets 3.52 P.M.	31 M	⊕ least distance from ⊕

Varieties.

ALMANACK FOR 1877.—For some years each Monthly Part of the "Leisure Hour" has had an Almanack, prepared for it by Mr. E. Dunkin, F.R.S., of the Royal Observatory. But as the wrappers of the Parts are not retained in binding the volume, we now give, at the request of many readers, the complete Almanack of the year, which will be useful for reference and valuable for preservation with the volume for the year. The Almanack will be found to present in brief view a large number of astronomical facts of popular and practical interest.

PRAYER.—Among the forms of insect life there is a little creature known to naturalists which can gather around itself a sufficiency of atmospheric air, and so clothed upon, it descends into the bottom of the pool; and you may see the little diver moving about dry, and at his ease, protected by his crystal vesture, though the water all around be stagnant and bitter. Prayer is such a protector; a transparent vesture—the world sees it not; real defence, it keeps out the world. By means of it the believer can gather so much of heavenly atmosphere around him, and with it descend into the putrid depths of this contaminating world, that for a season no evil will touch him, and he knows when to ascend for a new supply. Communion with God kept Daniel pure in Babylon.—*Dr. James Hamilton.*

TAY BRIDGE, THE LONGEST VIADUCT IN THE WORLD.—The first stone of the Tay bridge was laid on the Fifeshire side of the Tay in the month of July, 1871. The estimated cost of the undertaking was from £200,000 to £220,000. The object of the undertaking was that of connecting the important manufacturing town of Dundee with the North British Railway Company's branch between Edinburgh and Tayport. The length of the bridge is 10,321ft., and in shape it is not unlike the letter S. It is the longest bridge over a running stream in the world. On this account its construction was looked upon as one of the most important engineering works of recent times. Nor was it in respect of length alone that it claimed to be unique, and threatened to tax all the constructive resources of its builders. It was beset with even greater trials on account of the Tay being a tidal river, liable to enormous floods, and exposed to blasts of wind from east to west, which seemed likely not only to hinder the progress of the work, but to destroy such progress as had actually been made. But Mr. Bouch, the engineer, the contractors, and others who were directly concerned in its completion, had full confidence in the practicability of the undertaking; and the advantages which it promised were so obvious and so considerable that when the needful Act of Parliament was obtained, and the scheme fairly floated, the shares for the required capital of £300,000 were soon subscribed as a special and separate undertaking. For a long time very little progress was made in the work of construction, on account of the experimental character of the operations and the frequent accidents that befell. Latterly the progress has been more rapid, and it is expected that the bridge will be opened in 1877.—*Pictorial World.*

DEAN BUCKLAND AND DR. RIMBAULT.—When Dr. Buckland was Dean of Westminster, the lately deceased Dr. Rimbault applied to him for permission to make extracts from the registers of the Abbey, in order to ascertain the dates of admission and of the decease of some of the eminent men who had been on the establishment at Westminster. The difficulty which presented itself to the Dean's mind was, that it would be too great a tax upon his own time to wait while the extracts were made, and that he could not give up the keys of the Muniment-room to any person. Still he desired to oblige in all cases of literary research, and therefore offered to take Dr. Rimbault into the room, and to leave him there, to be let out at any appointed time. The proposal was particularly agreeable to Dr. Rimbault, as he could then work without interruption. Thinking that about three hours would suffice, and as he dined at an early hour, he appointed one o'clock. The Dean was not punctual, and the Doctor worked on. At three o'clock the latter felt the want of his dinner, his extracts were finished, and he wished only to be gone. "What could have detained the Dean?" But no step was to be heard. The evening service soon began, and at length the last peal of the organ had faded away, and all was quiet. It then became evident that Dr. Rimbault was forgotten, and how long was this to last? Before daylight had quite passed away, he had surveyed his position, and found that he was in a trap from which it was impossible to extricate himself. He could neither scale the window nor make himself heard. He was quite at the mercy of the Dean's memory; for he had not

told any one where he was going, because he expected to return home within a few hours. "Would his disappearance be advertised, and would the Dean see it, and when?" Dr. Rimbault had none of the bodily fat which is said to support life under long periods of fasting, and the last was therefore an important question with him. "When would the Muniment-room be next visited?" That was indeed a remote contingency; so that, like Ginevra in the chest which had closed over her with a spring lock, nothing but his skeleton might then be found. From these uncomfortable reflections Dr. Rimbault was released late at night. He had drawn together some parchments to recline upon, but not to sleep, when at last a key was heard in the door. The good Dean had gone home to dinner, and had taken his siesta; after which he commenced ruminating over the events of the day, and then at last thought of his prisoner! He returned to the Abbey at some inconvenience, and set him free with many apologies. Dr. Rimbault's ardour to be shut up in a muniment-room had then quite cooled.

WOOL AND OTHER WEALTH OF NEW SOUTH WALES.—Referring to the prospect of the squatters during the last shearing season, a colonial paper wrote:—"There will be shorn in New South Wales this year, 1876, upwards of 25,000,000 sheep, yielding approximately above 125,000,000lb. of wool, equal in value, at 1s. per lb., to £6,250,000 sterling. £6,500,000 sterling every year is a good nest egg even for a wealthy dependency of Great Britain. The cost of shearing this vast lot of sheep at 20s. per 100, about the average price, would be £125,000. The cost of transmitting the wool to the seaport for exportation might be set down at about the same figure. Without going into any more minute details, if we estimate the value of the wool clip of New South Wales for 1876 at £6,250,000, and set down 25 per cent. of that as expenses incurred by the wool grown from the time the sheep enters the woolshed to be shorn (this is the estimated cost in the working of a wool station) until the net proceeds are in the woolgrower's bank, there will be disbursed £1,552,500. This sum would go in shearing, carriage to port and to London, commission, brokerage, etc. Every year our wool is increasing in quantity and rising in quality, so that by the close of 1880, four years hence, New South Wales ought to have at least 30,000,000 of sheep, which, with horned cattle and horses, ought approximately to represent in money value upwards of £50,000,000 sterling."

EXHIBITION OF 1851: THE OPENING DESCRIBED BY QUEEN VICTORIA.—On May 1 the Queen writes in her Journal:—"The great event has taken place—a complete and beautiful triumph—a glorious and touching sight, one which I shall ever be proud of for my beloved Albert and my country. . . . Yes, it is a day which makes my heart swell with pride, joy, and thankfulness. . . . The glimpse of the transept through the iron gates, the waving palms, flowers, statues, myriads of people filling the galleries and seats around, gave me a sensation which I can never forget, and I felt much moved. . . . In a few seconds we proceeded, Albert leading me, having Vicky at his hand, and Bertie holding mine. The sight as we came to the middle, where the steps and chair (which I did not sit on) were placed, with the beautiful crystal fountain just in front of it, was magical, so vast, so glorious, so touching. One felt—as many did whom I have since spoken to—filled with devotion, more so than by any service I have ever heard. The tremendous cheers, the joy expressed in every face, the immensity of the building, the mixture of palms, flowers, trees, statues, fountains—the organ (with 200 instruments and 600 voices, which sounded like nothing), and my beloved husband, the author of this peace festival, which united the industry of all nations of the earth—all this was moving indeed, and it was and is a day to live for ever.—*Life of Prince Albert.*

SCOTTISH LANDOWNERS.—The new Scottish Domesday Book shows that the class of owners holding 100,000 acres and upwards is the class holding the largest proportion of land in Scotland. There are twenty-four owners in this class, and their holdings amount to 4,931,884 acres, which is about a fourth of the whole of Scotland. Taking the first four counties in the list, in the county of Aberdeen ten owners, out of 7,472, hold 561,538 acres, which is nearly one-half of the area of the county; nine owners in Argyll, out of 2,864, hold 767,457 acres, which is more than one third of the county; seven owners in Ayr, out of 9,376, hold 251,789 acres, which is about a third of the county; and two owners in Banff, out of 4,025, hold 231,984 acres, which is more than one-half of the county.

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